

Right Place, Right Time, Right Attitude – The Elements of Successful Networking

by Kevin Grubb

You and I know it: the job search is a hustle. It's applying, it's writing, it's getting LinkedIn, it's tweeting, it's interviews, it's dressing to impress... it's all of the above. Even more than that, it's about people. The people you meet at the places you go. It's "networking," which can be a difficult concept to understand.

Networking isn't linear. Talking with someone who doesn't necessarily have a position open or even the ability to hire doesn't feel the same as hitting "apply" online. But, your relationships could be the differentiator in your job-search success.

When I talk about networking, one of my favorite phrases to break down is, "I was just in the right place at the right time." (See also: Planned happenstance.)

Some of the best career success stories I've heard from students are cut from this cloth: a story about a junior making a chance connection on a train ride home or the senior finding out her cousin could refer her for a job while at the Thanksgiving dinner table. At first blush, this phrase seems like someone just got lucky. Truthfully, luck has only a little bit to do with it. A lot about making it happen is up to you.

There is such a thing as being in the right place at the right time. But, the critical truth is that you have to put yourself in a bunch of right places and have the right attitude so that you'll have the chance of experiencing a "right time." The right place is not likely going to be your bedroom. It's also not likely going to be the networking event you attend where you speak with no one.

You could be the one to experience being in the right place at the right time. Look for profession-related events on- and off-campus where you can meet with industry professionals (some good "right places"). Take advantage of chance meetings and talk confidently about your goals.

Kevin Grubb is the assistant director of Villanova's career center.

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